

## **Security and Terrorism Challenges in Nigeria: Causes, Consequences and the Way Forward**

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### **Abstract**

**T**errorism is currently a foremost challenge in Nigeria. Due to the prevalence of the act of terrorism in Nigeria, numerous numbers of people have lost their lives on daily basis. Despite the fact that government and the security agents claim to be on top of the matter, insecurity still persists. From all indications, the government as well as the security agent seems to be incapable of effectively securing the lives and properties of the citizenry from terrorists. The central focus of this paper is to examine security in the face of increasing incidence of terrorism in Nigeria by looking at the causes, consequences and the way forward. The paper used library science method and collected data purely from secondary materials. The paper found that amongst the causes of terrorism and security challenges are high rate of unemployment, prevalence of poverty, religious intolerance and partisan politics. These consequently resulted into not achieving macroeconomic objectives such as increase in economic growth as expected. The paper therefore suggested accountable and quality leaders, improved governance and service delivery; training of Nigerian police on tactic to contain terrorist, improvement in the warfare of the police officers, creation of employment for the populated teaming youth's as well as reduction in polity corruption.

**Keyword:** *Challenges, Corruption, Leaders, Poverty, Security, Terrorism, Unemployment and Violence.*

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## **Background to the Study**

Nigeria society is getting more and more insecure, more people are getting into various forms of crimes and terrorism and they are getting more desperate, ruthless, and sophisticated. Since the independence, the act of terrorist activity have ranged from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) group, Oodua People Congress (OPC) group, Movement for Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) group, Maitatsine group amongst others. In Nigeria today, new forms of violent crimes have been common. These include, kidnapping for ransom, pipeline vandalization, ritual killings, armed robbery and ethnic clashes (Ezeah and Osayi, 2014; Robinson, Obayori and Kingsley, 2014).

According to Ezeah and Osayi (2014), one of the hottest insecurity in Nigeria is Boko Haram, a terrorist sect whose overt and covert activities has threatened the foundation of the country. Similar to this is the activities of herdsmen's, which threatened the unity of Nigeria. Thus, the activities of both Boko Haram and herdsmen presently make Nigerians live their lives in fear without knowing when Boko Haram suicide bombers and the secret killings of herdsmen will come their way.

The ease and degree with which suicide bombers and herdsmen carry out their act shows that Nigeria government is not on top of the matter in term of security to stop the reoccurrence of these dreadful attacks. For instance the recent adoption of one hundred and ten female students in Dapchi government girl's secondary school in Borno state by Boko Haram and the killing of seventy three people in Benue state in one day by herdsmen are clear cases that the Nigerian government is not doing enough in term of security to stop these attacks. Also, the security agents in Nigeria compromise security of lives and properties of her citizenry. This scenario plays out in most other organized terrorist related crimes such as banks robberies and kidnappings (Ezeah and Osayi, 2014). Similarly, Onuoha (2011) opined that due to act of terrorism, over 3,500 people were internally displaced, more than 1,264 children orphaned, 392 women widowed, properties such as church and school buildings burnt down in the aftermath revolt of Boko Haram in Borno state as far back as the year 2009.

The Nigeria terrorism and security challenges have strengthened their operations and become an increasing threat to the national security of Nigeria, obviously there is no better time to dwell on this issue than now that Nigeria is facing serious domestic security challenges. Thus, a growing number of academic publications have been produced concerning these challenges. This paper seeks to examine the challenges of security and terrorism in Nigeria and ways of containing their siege on the polity. The remaining parts of this paper is discussed, conceptual issues, causes of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria, consequences of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria, the way forward and conclusion.

## **Conceptual Issues**

### **Security and National Security**

Security has been misunderstood to be the job of the defence force on the national frontiers and of the police inside the country to maintain security. This background equates

security as system of law and order maintenance. In the words of Agbonika and Agbonika (2013), security can be said to be a state of being or existence that is free from danger, fear, threat, anxiety and uncertainty. From this explanation, security actually surpasses every facet of human endeavour. By implication security embraces the persons, material and information from every form of danger.

According to Ezeah and Osayi (2014), security can be conceptualized as the knowledge and attitude members of a society possess regarding the protection of their lives and properties. Thus, being security aware means that one understands that there is the potential for people to deliberately or accidentally attacks steal damage or obtain information that will be to the detriment of the community.

According to Robinson, Obayori and Kingsley (2014), national security exists in two forms which are; the internal and external. Internal security is the act of keeping peace within the territory of an independent nation by upholding the national law and defending against internal security threats. On the other hand, external security domain has to do with how the country security is affected by its foreign policy and the nature of the geo-political circumstances surrounding it. For instance, Nigeria was at some time at cross- road and was dagger drawn with Cameroun over Bakassi peninsula. However, relative peace can be said to have been restored with the ceding of Bakassi pursuant to the judgment of the international Court of Justice on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Both internal and external security plays a complementary role in promoting national interest in order to achieve the national objective.

Given the background above, the objectives of National security involves the elimination of all distractions order and preserving the safety of the citizens at home and abroad in order to bring about economic growth and development.

### **Terrorism**

Terrorism is an action aimed at causing death or serious bodily injury to perceived enemies with the drive of frightening a population or compelling a government or an organization to do something against their wish. Madunagu (2011) defines terrorism as an unlawful violence or any other unlawful harmful act committed against civilians by groups or persons for political or other ideological goals by sub national groups, usually intended to influence an audience. Similarly, Radu (2002) affirms that terrorism is any attack or threat of attack against unarmed targets, intended to influence, change or divert major political decisions. Again, Wardlaw (1982) viewed terrorism as the use or threat of use of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and or fear including effects in a target group larger than immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to political demands of the perpetrators.

Given the various perception above, four elements form the essential features of terrorism or terrorist act. First is that the act must be violent. Second, the principal focus of the act is

usually non-combatant. Third, the act usually takes place in a peaceful environment but not necessarily without a conflict situation. Fourth, the ultimate motive for the resort to violence is to cause fear in order to influence those in political authority to respond to the demand of the individual or group behind the attack.

Terrorism or terrorism-related acts is perhaps the predominant security challenge in Nigeria today. For instance, the religious based Islamic fundamentalist group, popularly known as Boko Haram is the haven of terrorism in Nigeria today. The sect, which is predominantly based in the north eastern part of the country, has an ideology that is averse to western education and anything it represents. The sect also seeks an enthronement of Islamic (Sharia) government in the whole of Northern Nigeria. There by attacking churches, market places and government institutions, such as the police and military through armed attacks or suicide bombing. Notable attacks carried out by the Boko Haram sect with concomitant loss of lives and properties include: the Mogadishu barrack bombing in Abuja in June 2011 and the United Nations house bombing in Abuja in August 2011 (Robinson, Obayori and Kingsley, 2014).

#### **Causes of Insecurity and Terrorism in Nigeria**

**a. The Prevalence of Poverty:** Poverty is a state of being poor. Poverty is said to be worse than incurable diseases. The incidence of poverty is one of the reason that occasioned kidnapping and robbery. Virtually all kidnapers in Nigeria usually demand for large sum of money from the victim relatives as a condition for freedom. Similarly, Ilo (2008) argued that poverty is the greatest source of civil strife in Nigeria, in that when people are hungry and lack basic necessities of life, they are easily prone to violence.

**b. High Rate of Unemployment:** Unemployment is a situation whereby people who are willing and capable of working at the prevailing wage rate could not find any work to do. Unemployment is one of the terrorism and socio-security challenges that have been identified by governments over the years. Nowadays in Nigeria, unemployed youths have been used as thugs during political campaigns as well as in the time of crisis. But is quite unfortunate that Nigeria government has not design a workable policy of resolving the menace of unemployment. This is because in spite of all the laudable efforts of government at addressing the problem of unemployment, unemployment still remains a major problem in Nigeria. Such that between 2001 and 2016 Nigeria's unemployment rate is about 23.9 percent, (Obayori, 2016).

**c. Religious Intolerance:** Inability to tolerate one another religion is another cause of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria. Religion in the country has become a matter of competition where adherents engage in "holier than thou" attitude, building higher places of worship strategically on the roads and highways, yet many innocent Nigerians continue to be slaughtered for the simple fact that their religious affiliations is different from those of their murderer.

**d. The Role of Partisan Politics:** Partisan politics and political patronage play a major role in the occurrence of terrorism and security challenges in Nigeria. The sustenance of Boko Haram and herdsmen in the Northern part of the country is a clear case of partisan politics. In similar vein, the Nigeria former National Security Adviser (NSA) a person of Col. Sambo Dasuki in a paper delivered at the South-South Economic summit held in Asaba, Delta state on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2012, observed that Boko Haram members were getting better trained, well equipped and funded, while the Nigeria security agencies have no answer to the question posed by them. He traced the incessant bombings and suicide attacks ravaging in the Northern part of Nigeria to political undertone and politics of exclusion of the then ruling party (PDP) in the country (The Nation, May 3, 2012).

**e. The Introduction of Stiff Economic Measures:** Scholars as well as conflict analysts such as Ilo (2008) are of the view that religious, ethnic and regional tension in the country can only be understood in the light of the condition created by debts, economic crisis and structural adjustment in the country. On the other hand Adekunle (2007) posited that the stiff economic measures such as Austerity measures during the civil rule in the 1980's and SAP during the military rule have tended to be accompanied by violent protests, crises and conflicts, strike, demonstrations, armed coups and counter-coup attempts.

### **The Consequences of Terrorism and Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria**

The consequences of terrorism and security challenges in the Nigeria economy were divided into macro and micro consequences.

#### **(i) Macroeconomic Consequences**

Some of the macroeconomic objectives of the Nigerian economy are to achieve, reduction in the rate of unemployment, price stability, increase economic growth amongst others. Nigeria is considered to be an emerging economic with annual growth rates averaging more than 6% per year, making the Nigerian economy one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Foreign investors are therefore attracted to the country to gain from the numerous endowed human and natural resources that will yield the stated macroeconomic objectives. Thus, there is a high dependency ratio between FDI, the Nigerian oil sector, and the gross domestic product (GDP). Therefore, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays a crucial role in the high growth rate and reduction in unemployment rate. But as a result of terrorism and security challenges such as Niger Delta militant attacks on oil installations and Boko Haram's activities, the inflow of FDI has declined. FDI has dropped by 21.3 percent in 2012, from \$8.9 to \$5.5 billion (Robinson, Obayori and Kingsley, 2014). This is because no foreign investors want to invest their capital in an environment of fear, anarchy, terror and insecurity.

#### **(ii) Microeconomic Consequences**

In addition to the devastating macroeconomic consequences of the terrorism and security challenges are microeconomic effects on Nigeria. For instance, the attacks of Boko Haram on soft targets, such as church buildings, market centers and school has led to closure and abandonment of businesses. The news reported by Nigeria dailies showed that "Borno and



Yobe State are the epicenter of activities of the sect- have been crippled economically. Thousands of people have died in the sect's bloody campaign. Additionally, the activities of herdsmen in Benue, Taraba, Kogi and Nassarawa states have negatively affected farming activities and hence reduction in agricultural productivity, particularly Benue state which is the food basket of the Nation. Similarly, Boko Haram has also had a strong negative effect on smaller private entrepreneurs, forcing them to close their businesses and lay off workers. This is alarming, because Nigeria has a disturbingly high unemployment rate of 23.9 percent, which continues to rise despite high levels of FDI and economic growth (Obayori, 2016)

### **The Way Forward**

The following ways towards curbing violence caused by terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria are discussed.

**Creation of Employment and Poverty Alleviation Programmes:** The macro and socio-economic solution to the menace of insurgency in Nigeria is creation of employment and poverty alleviation programmes. If youth unemployment is solved and the poverty level is alleviated by the Nigerian government at various levels, there will be reduction in the level of insurgency if not completely wipeout. Job creation is a major solution to unemployment. According to Obayori (2016) Nigeria's unemployment rate between 2001 and 2016 stands at 23.9% of our total 50 Million youths. This is a great problem. Thus, government has to take many laudable steps to create jobs in order to reduce the rate of poverty.

**Accountable and Quality Leadership:** It is obvious that one of the greatest challenges facing the African countries particularly, Nigeria is lack of accountable leaders. Nigeria lack quality and accountable leaders to pilot the affair of the country by transforming the economic wealth and equitable distribution of the resources amongst the governed. Thus, leadership should be seen as opportunity to serve the nation and not opportunity to acquire wealth at the expense of the poor masses. Thus, there should be improved governance and service delivery by exemplary and transparent leadership.

**An end to Impunity:** Official impunity is a major grievance for many and an effective recruiting tool for terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and other militant groups. The government must investigate and prosecute not only crimes committed by militants, but also those perpetrated by political leaders and security personnel. The government needs to respond, as a step toward discouraging impunity.

**Transformation of Nigerian Police for Effective Service Delivery:** In a democratic state like Nigeria, police and not military should be trained to take up their constitutional responsibility of combating crime, control and quell internal conflicts and violence. Also, police officers should enjoy fat salary, free medical care and other essential condition of service in order to make them ready for the task ahead. Thus, they should be psychologically and morally motivated. Moreover, they should be well equipped with

sophisticated arms and ammunitions to be able to withstand the one in the hands of armed robbers and other hoodlums.

**Quality and Affordable Education for All Citizenry:** Education is the bedrock of any society that wants to leap into future greatness. This is because education breeds enlightened citizenry with bright ideas to develop the country and create self-empowerment in order to increase the growth and development of the economy. Thus, good knowledge will save the youths from various forms of social vices and unnecessary manipulations by the elites and politicians for conflicts and to settle bitter political and religious animosity as a result of joblessness and idleness.

### **Conclusion**

Security and Terrorism challenges have threatened the unity and stability of Nigeria nation. Since there is a strong link between governance and national security, the paper has clearly shown that the country needs good governance to maintain peace and security. This is because bad governance threatens the security of the nation. Also, poor leadership makes people to lose confidence in the political and religious leaders. Transparent leaders are therefore needed to move the country forward. Thus, the federal and state as well as the local governments must develop and implement comprehensive plans to tackle not only physical security but also the grievances that fuel the insurgency. This will help to build a Nigeria where people can sleep with their two eye close and where the Hausa's, Igbo's and Yoruba's can live together harmoniously.

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